

CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

1-8. (cancelled)

9. (new) A non-heat treated steel product for hot forging and having easy fracture splitting, consisting essentially of: by weight, C: 0.3-0.8%, Si: 0.1-2.0%, Mn: 0.3-1.5%, P: 0.05-0.15%, Cr: 0-1.0%, V: 0-0.4%, Al: 0-0.05%, N: 0.005-0.03% and the balance being Fe and inevitable impurities, provided that:

(1) the contents of C, Mn and Cr fulfill the following condition:

$$1.40(\text{C}\%) + 0.28(\text{Mn}\%) + 0.50(\text{Cr}\%) \geq 0.75$$

(2) the pearlite area fraction after hot forging is 50% or more, and

(3) the shape of the product being a combination of two or more components of a machine part with a notch or notches provided by processing with a thermal source selected from the group consisting of laser, electron beam, plasma arc, TIG, and equivalents thereof; the intermediate product being easily split by fracture upon application of load, whereby fracturing starts from the notch or notches to separate the two or more components into distinct parts.

10. (new) A non-heat treated steel for hot forging according to claim 9, further consisting of: one or more of Pb: up to 0.3%, S: up to 0.2%, Ca: up to 0.1% and Bi: up to 0.3.

11. (new) An intermediate product of non-heat treated steel produced by hot forging of the non-heat treated steel having an alloy composition defined in claim 9 with forging accuracy improved by hot coining or hot sizing during the hot forging at a temperature of 600°C or higher.

12. (new) The intermediate product of claim 9, wherein the two or more components of a machine part are the big end part and the small end/rod part of a connecting rod of an internal combustion reciprocal engine.

13. (new) An intermediate product of non-heat treated steel produced by hot forging of the non-heat treated steel having an alloy composition defined in claim 10 with forging accuracy improved by hot coining or hot sizing during the hot forging at a temperature of 600°C or higher.

14. (new) The intermediate product of claim 13, wherein the two or more components of a machine part are the big end part and the small end/rod part of a connecting rod of an internal combustion reciprocal engine.